**Greek Comedy Facts**

* not admitted to Dionysus festival till 487-486 B.C. - late
* unknown origins or influences
* perhaps from improvisations of leaders of phallic songs
* or from mime - satirical treatment of domestic situations or burlesqued myths
* 6 comic dramatists besides Aristophanes (his is the only extant work)
* Called "Old Comedy" (Menander's plays are considered to be Greek "New Comedy")
* commentary on contemporary society, politics, literature, and Peloponnesian War.
* Based on a "happy idea" - a private peace with a warring power or a sex strike to stop war
* exaggerated, farcical, sensual pleasures

source: <http://novaonline.nvcc.edu/eli/spd130et/ancientgreek.htm#Com>

* Certain principles were not overturned in the "safe space" of comedy:
* --one still didn't speak ill of the dead
* --one did not undermine religion in ways that might linger after the play was over
* --one did not criticize the institution of democracy
* --one did not impugn the honor of any respectable woman.

source: <http://humanities.psydeshow.org/home/nov-7.htm>  
  
  
**Greek Comedy Structure**

* --**Prologue** (introduces situation)
* --**Parados** (entry of chorus)
* --**Agon** (struggle/dispute)chorus gives debate
* --**Parabasis** (direct appeal to the audience:a choral ode addressing the audience, in which a social or political problem in discussedin Aristophanes, usually dealing with the playwright's own views on the status of comedy)
* -- **Episodes** (five scenes dealing with the comic theme)
* --**Exodus** (exit of chorus)scenes show the result of the happy idea final scene: all reconcile and exit to feast or revelry

source: <http://humanities.psydeshow.org/home/nov-7.htm>  
  
  
  
  
**Characteristics of Greek Comedy**

* Make fun of well known people and customs of the era, including gods and religion
* More important to be funny than logical; not always follows rational time, place and sequence possibilities
* A change in fortune was always for the better; conflict resolution leads to a happy ending.
* Made fun of “inferior” or ugly people, such as those with disabilities
* Used the common people’s language style
* Plots involve ordinary people and their influence on each other
* Fantastical elements, mistaken identities, battle of the sexes, jumping to conclusions, and improbable disguises are part of the comedy.
* Chorus often dresses as animals while character wore street clothes and grotesque masks.